

Cara Reece joins The Environment Bank team

Here is a pen portrait of Cara :

I recently moved to the UK from Melbourne, Australia, where I worked for BushBroker, a project of the Victorian state government's Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

Although within the public sector, BushBroker provides a system similar to that of The Environment Bank, where 'offsets' can be located on a different property to where native vegetation/habitat is being cleared, through the trade of Native Vegetation Credits (a gain in the quantity and/or quality of native vegetation that is subject to a secure and ongoing agreement).

A University of Melbourne graduate in Zoology (BSc) and Conservation, Restoration and Landscape Management (MSc), I worked with BushBroker as the 'Trader'. A BushBroker Trader responds to offset search requests from developers clearing native vegetation, identifies potential offset sites in remnant patches of native vegetation and facilitates the trade of Credits between developers and landowners. During January 2010, I was elevated to also fill the Senior BushBroker Project Officer role which required management of all BushBroker activities, including supervision of field and administration staff.

Prior to my role as Trader, as a BushBroker Field Officer, I carried out assessments of potential offset sites ('receptor sites') against Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), using the DSE's 'habitat hectares' approach. This approach is based on comparisons between existing vegetation features and those of 'benchmarks' representing the average characteristics of mature stands of native vegetation of the same community type in a 'natural' or 'undisturbed' condition. In this role I also prepared detailed 10 year management plans and scored 'gain' points (Native Vegetation Credits) based on landowner commitments.

Positions I have held prior to this include Research Assistant in Fire Ecology with the University of Melbourne, Revegetation Implementation Facilitator with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), scholarship recipient with an ecosystem restoration project (Arid Recovery) in South Australia and Research Assistant with the Animal Behaviour Research Unit (ABRU) in Mikumi National Park, Tanzania.